

The incident occurred few hours after suspected military personnel killed a 27-year-old man in Biogbolo, a suburb of the state capital.

According to residents, the killing might not be unconnected with the alleged dispossession of a soldier of his mobile phone at gunpoint.

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The attack on the checkpoint occurred about 11pm on Wednesday during a routine stop-and-search operation.

It was gathered that the policemen, who were attacked at the checkpoint popular as 'collection point' among commercial tricycle operators, were caught unawares.

Witnesses reported that the policemen were dispossessed of two AK-47 rifles and that one sergeant who tried to show gallantry was critically injured.

The killing at Biogbolo, said to be a reprisal, provoked a protest that led to youths barricading the Biogbolo end of the Mbiama-Yenagoa expressway, demanding justice.

Remains of the victim, who was later identified as Whoknowstomorrow Bright, popularly called Albino, was deposited at a morgue by the police.

A resident, who simply identified himself as Frank, said: "We were just sitting at an area drinking, when suddenly we saw soldiers. Before we could ask what was happening, there was rain of bullets. Some of us ran, some injured, while one of the youths was killed. One was taken into custody and later released at their headquarters at Igbogene after investigation.

“What happened is unjust. We did nothing to be fired at. We are calling on all human rights and pressure groups to seek justice for the innocent victim,” he said.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the Bayelsa, DSP Asinim Butswat, said he was yet to get a brief of the stolen rifles, but confirmed that the police at Biogbolo evacuated the body of a young man.

He, however, said the police were not aware that soldiers killed him.